# A STUDY OF JOHN STEINBECK

## The Group in His Fiction

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### INTRODUCTION

The suffering and sorrow of human beings are related to their solitude, their joy and pleasure, to their association, said a certain sociologist. However selfish a man may be, in his nature there is some principle which interests him in the fortunes of others, though he derives nothing from them except the pleasure of seeing them. This principle will not allow him to enjoy perfect happiness while he remains isolated. That principle is, according to that sociologist, "the principle of union" which constitutes human nature, together with the principle of self-preservation. Many sociologists have traced the origin of the formation of society to this aspect of human nature, which means that this

principle is a kind of axiom in sociology. In literature, what view can be taken of this principle, and what form does it take?

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> The crowd pourd into the road, and it was no longer loose and listless. It had become a quick, silent and deadly efficient machine. . . . It was just one big—animal, going down the road. Just all animal.[1]

So runs a description of strikers running toward the barricade in *In Dubious Battle*. The group of people is visualized here by John Steinbeck as a wave, a macine, or an unnamed animal—some being other than human. This being, which moves about in almost all the works of Steinbeck with an intense energy, shows his preoccupation with the group. The purpose of this thesis is to look for the answers to the problems presented above through a study of the works of John Steinbeck—that is, to search for the connections between sociology and literature in his case. It will serve this purpose to trace, first, the evolution of Steinbeck's intuition and view of the principle of union (Chapters I and II), and second, his attempts to give them form (Chapter III).

## Chapter I The Thirties

### (i)

> Their coming was like a red wave with a silver crest. Rodriguez turned in his saddle and looked proudly at the hurtling behind him, following his orders as though they were the multimembers of one great body governed by his brain.[2]

A group thus comes out as early as in the author's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, where the Panama troop has the movement of a wave or an unnamed animal. Yet its neatness, like that of a bright toy, is soon swallowed up by another wave which rolls in from the opposite side:

> A crowd of shouting men poured through the undefended gate and up the broad street. At crossing alleys, part of the line changed its course, like a river flowing backwards into its tributaries.[3]

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[1] John Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, New York, The Modern Library, 1939, p. 315.
[2] John Steinbeck, *Cup of Gold*, New York, Bantam Books, 1962, p. 134.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

A group of pirates sacks Panama with the force of running water, but they are also fated to scatter and vanish, drop by drop, on the foreign land after their leader deserts them.

The sudden removal of leadership brings a mass into helplessness. The author sees this fact also in the slaves who, being freed from their slavery, wander listlessly about for a time and watch the others go to work with something of longing. After a little, they either sign new papers of indenture or go marauding like tigers from a broken cage.[1] Concerning that helplessness, the soldiers are not so different from the slaves, as in shown by Adam Trask in *East of Eden*, a work almost twenty years after *Cup of Gold*. Discharged from the army, Adam felt a gripping loneliness for his fellow-soldiers and an impulse to rush into any crowd. The first crowded place he found was a little bar, where " he sighed with pleasure, almost nestled in the human clot the way a cat nestles into a woodpile."[2] Following in the steps of many discharged soldiers, Adam re-enlisted just like the slaves in *Cup of Gold* did. It is a hard thing to leave any deeply routined life, even if one hates it,[3] and helplessness sometimes even drives one insane. Again in *Cup of Gold*, released by the years from his bondage, the overseer of the slaves found his freedom too strong a drug for the mind that had been used to outside control. That mind snapped, and fury flooded in on him . . . .[4] and he went insane. A similar phenomenon appears in a bereaved husband in the short story " The Harness." He is half mad on the removal of the oppressive control of his wife; he explains it to himself thus:

> It seemed like something snapped inside of me. Something like a suspender strap. It made me all come apart.[5]

These phenomena seem to have something in common with the mob-

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[2] John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, New York, The Viking Press, 1952, pp. 47–8.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Steinbeck, *Cup of Gold*, p. 61.

[5] John Steinbeck, " The Harness," *The Long Valley*, New York, The Viking Press, 1961, p. 117.

psychology which provides the subject of the short story "The Vigilante." When a vigilante is howling with the mob to lynch a black man his chest is full but at the moment he leaves the outskirt of the mob, a cold loneliness falls upon him and he looks for a crowd to nestle into like Adam Trask did.[1] This story shows the force immanent in a group so strong that "a single man is left a hull"[2] when a group breaks up. Later, such phenomena are clarified by an explicit view in the log of an expedition to the Gulf of California:[3]

> Among men, processes of co-ordination and disintegration follow each other with great regularity, and the index of the co-ordination is the measure of the disintegration which follows. There is no mob like a group of well-drilled soldiers when they have thrown off their discipline. And there is no lostness like that which comes to a man when a perfect and certain pattern has dissolved about him.[4]

This idea develops further into his political viewpoint after World War II, as will be mentioned in the next chapter.

To return to *Cup of Gold*, the various kinds of masses in the novel —slaves, pirates, soldiers, and citizens, the large numbers of whom the author tries to express by means of enumeration—take the forms of the vulgar herd or foolish mob who easily submit themselves to the manipulation of the leader, Henry Morgan. In other words, a large part of the novel forms a study of mass psychology through Morgan, for his material success is founded on it. After the sack of Panama, which disillusioned him, Morgan deserts his men, whom he regards as "the wheels of his factory,"[5] and survives in decent society as Sir Henry.

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[1] John Steinbeck, "The Vigilante," *The Long Valley*, pp. 134–5.

[2] Peter Lisca, *The Wide World of John Steinbeck*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1958, p. 97.

[3] The expedition was made together with Ed Ricketts, a biologist, in the spring of 1940. Cf. Steinbeck's letter concerning *Sea of Cortez*, as quoted by Lisca, p. 138: "When this work is done I will have finished a cycle of work that has been biting me for many years and it is simply the careful statement of the thesis of work to be done in the future."

[4] John Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, NewY ork, The Viking Press, 1951, p. 264.

[5] Steinbeck, *Cup of Gold*, p. 62.

His solitude, his "estrangement from his fellow men"[1] continues throughout his life. Therefore, what Morgan says in his deathbed delirium—"I am the center of all things and can not move. I am as heavy as the universe. Perhaps I am the universe."[2]—sounds like the assertion of a self-centered instinct, the principle of self-preservation.

This ending singularly parallels that of the author's second novel, *To a God Unknown;* its protagonist, Joseph Wayne, ends his life with an intuition similar to Morgan's, saying "I am the land and I am the rain."[3] This is also a self-assertion, yet one connected with the principle of union, for while Morgan sought happiness through "dominating the world," Joseph seeks his through "renunciation."[4]

*To a God Unknown* is the story of a man's self-sacrifice to protect the land from drought. The deed of cutting his own wrist as a prayer for rain is based not on mere love nor fear of nature but an intution identifying himself with it. How does Joseph get this intuition? Here again a group comes out, dancing at a fiesta:

> Whole sections of the packed dancing space were bobbing to the rhythm. The humming grew savage and deep and vibrant where at first there had been laughter and shouted jokes. One man had been notable for his height, another for the deepness of his voice. . . but that was changing. The dancers lost identity . . . each person became a part of the dancing body, and the soul of the body was the rhythm.[5]

Joseph stands apart, but feeling tied to the dancing body, he thinks "we have found something here, all of us. In some way we've come closer to the earth for a moment." He feels deep pleasure and strange faith arising in him, and he is convinced that something will come of this kind of powerful prayer.[6] What is that pleasure and faith? Nothing but the intuition that there is an essential union between man

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[1] Lisca, p. 32.

[2] Steinbeck, *Cup of Gold*, p. 196.

[3] John Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, New York, Bantam Books, 1960, p. 179.

[4] Maxwell Geismar, "John Steinbeck: Of Wrath or Joy," *Writers in Crisis*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1961, p. 248.

[5] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, p. 87.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

and man, and between man and nature. However, one more bit of education is necessary to turn this intuition into actual self-sacrifice. The educator is an old hermit who kills some animal on the cliff's edge every sunset. He explains to Joseph that he is, through the beast, the sun at the moment, and goes over the edge of the world himself with the sun.[1] (The image of this hermit reappears in *Sweet Thursday* more than twenty years later as a seer who says, " I have to go to the sunset now. I've come to the point where I don't think it can go down without me."[2]) In addition to the identification with nature, the hermit informs Joseph that the sacrificial ritual is a thing hidden in every man. " It tries to get out," says the hermit, " but a man's fears distort it. . . What does get out is changed."[3] Later, *Sea of Cortez* defines " man's unconscious heritage of the experiences of his race "[4] from the biological viewpoint as an indication of " a group psyche-memory." Just as gills are a component of the developing human, the author supposes a parallel psychic development.

> If there be a life-memory strong enough to leave its symbol in vestigial gills, the preponderantly aquatic symbols in the individual unconscious might well be indications of a group psyche-memory which is the foundation of the whole unconscious.[5]

Steinbeck's preoccupation with the group, which first appeared as his interest in mass-psychology in *Cup of Gold*, evolved new aspects all at once in *To a God Unknown*. Group psyche-memory, union with nature, and consequential altruism were to motivate his following works to an even larger extent.

As with the subject, the technique also evolved. Joseph's intuition becomes reasonable partly through the author's tendency to personify nature. The earth, the clouds, the trees, the rivers, the rocks—all are described as having their own wills and feelings; the " curious female-

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[2] John Steinbeck, *Sweet Thursday*, New York, Bantam Books, 1956, p. 48.

[3] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, p. 148.

[4] Lisca, p. 53.

[5] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 32.

ness"[1] of nature is especially emphasized for its effect on Joseph's love of the land, Nuestra Señore (Our Lady), his conviction that " the earth is our mother, and everything that lives has life from the mother and goes back into the mother."[2] It is notable that Joseph tends to think of everything in terms of " we, our, us." His sister-in-law perceives such a tendency, that he is never aware of persons or units, but only of people or the whole.[3] This combines with his sacrificial deed in the characterization of Joseph as " an Abraham,"[4] a patriarch who is willing to renounce himself for the whole tribe of which hs is the representative.

The protagonist has shifted from an individual in *Cup of Gold* to a representative in *To a God Unknown*. Steinbeck goes further to groups themselves frankly in his next two novels, *The Pasture of Heaven* and *Tortilla Flat*. *The Pasture of Heaven* is a series of episodes about a group of people who live in, come into, or go out of that beautifully-named valley. The episodes work together to present a community as one whole, underlain by a certain common subject. Almost all the episodes deal with " false ideals,"[5] or one may call them " ignorant hopes,"[6] which are fated to be broken down in the face of reality. The common subject is emphasizd by the prologue and the epilogue framing the stories. The prologue shows that the ideal of the discoverer and namer of that valley remained unrealizd, while the epilogue brings a group of travellers to the ridge peak and ironically imposes again false ideals upon them because of the beauty of the valley below them. Thus, the readers are given a perspective on the split between the reality and the false ideals which lead peole.

That does not mean that false ideals are obstacles to human life. People need them. That is observable in legends or myths, which

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[1] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, p. 4.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[3] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, p. 134.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[5] Frederic I. Carpenter, " John Steinbeck: American Dreamer," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, eds. E. W. Tedlock, Jr. and C. V. Wicker, New Mexico, University of New Mexico Press, 1957, p. 72.

[6] Geismar, p. 247.

combine false ideals with group psyche-memories. Looking down into the Gulf of California, the author thinks to himself that if the real facts of a myth were revealed,

> a lot of people would feel a sharp personal loss—a Snata Claus loss. . . . For the ocean, deep and black in the depths, is like the low dark levels of our minds in which the dream symbols incubate and sometimes rise up to sight like the Old Man of the Sea. And even if the symbol vision be horrible, it is there and it is ours. And ocean without its unnamed monsters would be like a completely dreamless sleep.[1]

Sometimes such a symbol is "a saving grace,"[2] because it implies a change from bad present to a better future; if ever any man were sure that his future would be no better than his past, he might deeply wish to cease to live. The slave hopes for freedom, the weary man for rest, the hungry for food.[3] And the most notable thing is that

> the feeders of hope, economic and religious, have from these simple strivings of dissatisfaction managed to create a world picture which is very hard to escape.[4]

The false ideal which leads the poeple of *The Pasture of Heaven* is also what drove Henry Morgan and the pirates to Panama, and it is to lead groups of people in the author's coming works with a far deeper significance.

Though *Fortilla Flat* is also a series of episodes about a group of people, it does not use the same method as the former work. From the beginning, the author declares that

> this is the story of how that group came into being, of how it flourished and grew to be an organization beautiful and wise . . . how the group disintegrated.[5]

This time, the underlying subject is altruism. The group originates in the little altruism with which Danny rents a house to Pilon, his friend. Gradually vagrant Pissanos gather at Danny's house and come to lead a kind of communal life. Then, their loose association is tightened

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 31.

[2] Blake Nevius, "Steinbeck: One Aspect," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 199.

[3] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 86.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] John Steinbeck, Preface to *Tortilla Flat*, New York, The New American Library, 1959, p. vii.

when they have one common purpose generated by altruism—to support Pirate's plan of offering St. Francis an old gold candlestick.

> The bag of money [of Pirate] had become the symbolic center of the frendship, the point of trust about which the fraternity revolved. They were proud of the money, proud that they had never tampered with it. About the guardianship of the Pirate's money there had grown a structure of self-respect and not a little complacency.[1]

One more peak is shown in their team-work of consoling Danny, who has become a hypocondriac. They can not enjoy perfect happiness while one member remains unhappy.

> Thou art not alone. Thy friends are caught in this state of thine. They look at thee from their eye-corners. . . Thy life is not thine own to govern, Danny, for it controls other lives. See how thy friends suffer! Spring to life, Danny, that thy friends may live again.[2]

" By altruism more pure than most can conceive,"[3] they are urged to give a big party for Danny. This is the subject which is to be repeated later in *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. The way in which the rumor travels through a town is always a mystery to the author; he presents this wonder many times, in *Tortilla Flat*, *The Pearl*, *The Moon Is Down*, *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. Anyway, all the people get he news and come to the party until " the whole happy soul of Tortilla Flat tore itself from restraint and arose into the air, one ecstatic unit."[4] In the midst of the ecstasy Danny dies. The magnet that drew the group has lost its virtue, so they burn the house, " symbol of holy friendship," and walk away—no two walking together.[5] Now the group disintegrated completely.

Thus, through the author's preoccupation with the group in its various aspects—mass psychology, group psyche-memory, union with nature, altruism, false ideal, the whole soul of a town—his intuition of principle of union has evolved. It reaches its first explicit statement

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[1] Steinbeck, *Tortilla Flat*, p. 91.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[5] Steinbeck, *Tortilla Flat*, p. 144.

in " The Leader of the People." A former pioneer leader reminisces on their crossing to the West.

> " It was a whole bunch of people made into one big crawling beast. And I was the head. It was westering and westering. Everyman wanted something for himself, but the big beast that was all of them wanted only westering. I was the leader, but if I hadn't been there, someone else would have been the head. The thing had to have a head."[1]

This conception of leadership is greatly different from that of *Cup of Gold.* A leader needs no " estrangement from his fellow-men " such as Henry Morgan did. It may be anyone; a leader comes out wherever people associate. This conception is continued in *In Dubious Battle*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Moon Is Down.* Yet, the deeper significance of this statement is in the movement of a group like an unnamed beast. The boy hearer thinks of centipedes when his grandfather, the narrator, mentions ants. As Peter Lisca says, such an analogy points out " the energy that is released when the many desires of man can find expression in one unifying activity or aspiration "[2] and thereby indicates some affirmative tone. Here seems to be the turning point of Steinbeck's intuition into a certain view of the principle of union.

For the most part, that intuition of steinbeck which has been traced so far is based upon his love of nature and the primitive people of California. There is no denying the fact that the same love runs through all his works. Yet there must have been some strong force which led his intuition to that turning point. A clue may be found in " The Raid," in which the instinctive altruism of Joseph or the Pissanos turns into a more conscious one. A new Communist feels " all full up—and good" after going through the first raid, for he knows that what he is doing is all for the sake of others. He confesses that he felt just as in the Bible—" Forgive them because they don't know what they're doing."[3] The religious feeling generated from altruism is to expand in the coming *In Dupious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath.* What came into sight

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[1] John Steinbeck, " The Leader of the People," *The Long Valley*, p. 302.

[2] Lisca, p. 106.

[3] John Steinbeck, " The Raid," *The Long Valley*, p. 108.

in " The Raid "—the social background of the thirties—is the very requisite with which the author had to be confronted in order to drive his intuition into a clear view of the principle of union. The results of this confrontation are *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. It will be necessary, then, to look over that background in advance, especially the condition of the farm laborers who are the protagonists of these three works.

(ii)

The Great Depression ravaged all fields of America in the thirties, but most ferociously agricultural industry.[1] Calamities had accumulated on the farmers during the preceding years, but the Depression was " the last straw in the accumulation "[2] and it fell with full force. The basic causes of their economic depression—the decline in the price of produce and the wage of farm laborers—were in the surplus of crops, of farms, and of farmers. Overproduction was chiefly attributed to the progress in farm technology. " Science had made two blades of grass grow where one grew before, only to have the second blade depress the price of both."[3] The technological progress also produced over-population on the farms. For instance, one tractor made ten families superfluous, so that during the decade one-third of all sharecroppers in America were " tractored off " and become a drove of migrant farm laborers. The number of such people was largest in Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma. The farm technology kept threatening them constantly: the innovation of the cotton picker, the corn picker, the small combine, and other harvesting and tillage equipment.

The surplus of labor was caused not only by machinery, however. The fall in farm real estate value caused 40% of all farms to be mort-

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[1] The sources for this whole section are in these two books: Broadus Mitchell, *Depression Decade*, Vol. IX of *The Economic History of the United States*, New York, Rinehart & Co., 1947; David A. Shannon, ed., *The Great Depression*, Englewood Clitts, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1960.

[2] Shannon, p. 30.

Mitchell, p. 65.

gaged, and many foreclosured small land owners also turned into migrants. Moreover, jobless city workers joined them. Then, nature took a hand with the droughts of 1934 and 1936. The central portion of the United States, including Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Arkansas, was called the " dust bowl," where winds filled the atmosphere for miles above the earth's surface with dense brown clouds. " Dusted out " of the pulverized land, a throng of these people added to the number of migrants. They were forced to migrate, for American agriculture had tended toward large-scale, single-crop commercial farming, and under such a system laborers were needed for only the brief period while the one crop was being harvested. They had to move on following the harvest. At best, they could find employment for only a few months a year, and there were too many of them. A gold rush for work was ineviable. Therefore, hand-bills were distributed among those migrants with the design of drawing the laborers to work at the lowest wage.

> " For every manload to lift, five pairs of arms extended to lift it; for every stomachful of food available, five mouths open." (*The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 19)

Of course, some relief measures were taken for the farmers, but the situation was so serious that many of them had no effect, or, in some cases, even made things worse. For example, since 1933 the Agricultural Adjustment Act had been trying to control prices for the purpose of re-establishing the purchasing power of farmers, yet its progress was disturbed by the selfish egoism of the commercial farmers themselves, even though the A.A.A. was primarily intended to help them. They never efficiently joined in its plan of reducing output and sales, even though this act stubbornly repsected their voluntary agreements. In the end, the government was driven to take steps to accomplish control through outright destruction—" plow-up " and " kill ".[1] Paid to do so, commercial farmers destroyed thousands of tons of wheat, corn, fruit, cotton, and hogs; less than one-tenth of those products were given to the depressed people.

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[1] Mitchell, p. 189.

" Burn coffee for fuel in the ships. Burn corn to keep warm, it makes a hot fire. Dump potatoes in the rivers and place guards along the banks to keep the hungry people from fishing them out. Slaughter the pigs and bury them and let the putrescence drip down into the earth." (*The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 25)

To keep the price up, a million hungry people had to stand by and watch the products destroyed.

(iii)

Steinbeck was quite familiar with such distressed lives because he had himself worked with migrant laborers on ranches since his boyhood.[1] This experience served to form his intuition into his own peculiar view of the principle of union. Let us first consider the process in *In Dubious Battle*. The novel is based on the preceding two subjects: the animal-like movement of a group in "The Leader of the People" and the consciousness of altruism in "The Raid" The author found the best material for these subjects—a strike. The story begins with the effort of two Communists to draw a group of migrants out of their separative indifference and into a strong band. Their purpose was to teach people to " fight in a bunch," for ten men can lift nearly twelve times as big a load as one man can.[2] As expected, a band which originated in co-operation in helping a child-birth grew into a strike. At the start of the strike, the people seemed filled with a terrible joy and the place swam with activity.[3] The joy and energy of association reached their peak when the people were exhorted by one of the leaders to rush to the barricade.

A long throaty animal howl went up . . . The eyes of the men and women were entranced. The bodies waved slowly, in unison. No more lone cries came from lone men. They moved together, looked alike. The roar was one voice, coming from many throats.[4]

The dancing body in *To a God Unknown* is brought to mind at once by

[1] Lisca, p. 110.
[2] Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, p. 61.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

this scene. Then,

> the crowd poured into the road, and it was no longer loose and listless. It had become a quick, silent, and deadly efficient machine.[1]

It was as if all of them disappeared and turned into one big animal going down the road,[2] just like the " big crawling beast " in "The Leader of the People" Yet, considering the fact that " a smell of blood seemed to steam them up,"[3] the previous affirmative tone cannot be perceived in this case. Rather, a kind of fear is perceived in the words of the leaders; nobody can tell what a group will do, they say, because " it is different from the men in it," and because " it's stronger than all men put together."[4] Moreover, its animal-like movement seems to prove the observation stated by a certain scientist in this way: when group-man wants to move, he makes a standard, a purpose such as the Holy Land, Democracy, or Communism, but these words are used simply to reassure the brains of individual men, and " the group simply wants to move, to fight."[5]

Steinbeck's study of " group-man " is expressed through this scientist, Dr. Burton, in biological terms.

> " A man in a group isn't himself at all, he's a cell in an organism that isn't like him any more than the cells in your body are like you. . . . "[6]

Later, at the Gulf of California, Steinbeck stares in wonder at the schools of fish which, in their millions, turn as a unit and dive as a unit, following a pattern minute as to direction and depth and speed.

> We cannot conceive of this intricasy until we are able to think of the school as an animal itself, reacting with all its cells to stimuli which perhaps might not influence one fish at all. And this larger animal, the school, seems to have a nature and drive and ends of its own. It is more than and different from the sum of its units.[7]

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[1] Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, p. 315.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 317.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 144–5.
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 240.

According to Dr. Burton's study, a leader is " an expression of group-man, a cell endowed with a special function, like an eye cell." Just as the eye takes orders from and gives orders to the brain, a leader draws force from group-man and at the same time directs him.[1] That is what grandfather in "The Leader of the People" knew by intuition, but this conception of leadership remains a mere idea until it is fused into the characterization of Tom Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*. After that, in *Sea of Cortez*, the author advances the conception by taking a hint from the movement of the amoebas. He wonders what would occur if the molecules which " happened " to be situated in the forefront of the pseudopodium should be endowed with the consciousness that they are directly leading that great procession.[2] He reaches its final conclusion that

> the people we call leaders are simply those who, at the given moment, are moving in the direction behind which will be found the greatest weight, and which represents a future mass movement.[3]

(*The Moon Is Down*, which comes immediately after *Sea of Cortez*, takes over this conception, but in the form of mere statement.)

To return to Dr. Burton's study, he continues his cytological analogy: germs correspond to social injustice, a swelling around the wound is the fight against it, the pain is the battle. The strike is a wound, the first battleground. As group-men are always getting some kind of infection,[4] if the cells (group-men) lose the first fight, germs will spread —that means that a social injustice may cause even a war.

> " The pleasure we get in scratching an itch causes death to a great number of cells. Maybe group-man gets pleasure when individual men are wiped out in a war."[5]

In *Sea of Cortez*, which was written in the year of the outbreak of war in Europe, the author says:

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[1] Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, p. 145.
[2] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, pp. 138–9.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 138.
[4] Steinbeck, *In Dubious Battle*, p. 144.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 146.

> It is one diagnostic trait of Homo Sapiens that groups of individuals are periodically infected with a feverish nervousness which causes the individual to turn on and destroy, not only his own kind, but the works of his own kind.[1]

Steinbeck's view of society as expressed through Dr. Burton has a strange similarity to the sociology of Thomas Hobbes, who also compared social commotion with illness, civil war with the death of a man. Hobbes began his analogy with the mention of a watch, which was an object of wonder in his time. Imitating nature, the art of man made various automata (machines), like a watch, which have artificial life.

> Art goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent work of Nature, Man. For, by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin, CIVITAS) which is but an Artificial Man. . . . (Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan; or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civill.*)

He set forth an illustration of Leviathan; it was a huge human figure standing aove the towns, a figure formed by numerous small human beings. What is this monster? Nothing but a group-man for Steinbeck.

However, Steinbeck's view of society has an even more basic similarity to that of Spenser, who compared society not with a machine as Hobbes did, but with a living organism and held the view that any part perfoms a function indispensable to the one whole. A similar idea underlies not only Steinbeck's group-man theory but also his technical phase —for example, his way of creating characters, which shall be mentioned later in Chapter III.

A large part of *In Dubious Battle* is based on the cold observation and analysis of group-man, yet with only that it would hardly become a literary work. There is another subject. To look at group-man objectively, resisting the temptation to share in its passionate outbursts of strong emotion, is a lonely task.[2] Dr. Burton often confeses his lonleiness because he has nothing to hate, and because he is working

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 17.

[2] Frederick J. Hoffman, " Violence and Rhetoric in the 1930's," *The Modern Novel in America*, 1900–1950, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1951, p. 148.

all alone toward nothing.[1] The sorrow of men is truly related to their solitude, while the pleasure of men in their association is expressed through Comrade Norlan, who is new to strike tactics. There is no denying the fact that the leaders have something in common with Henry Morgan in the point of manipulating men. They are also, like Morgan, " the feeders of hope" because they stir people up in spite of the fact that they know the strike will be unsuccessful. However, the affirmative tone used in reporting the pure altruism growing in Jim balances the coldness of the group-man study and of the exposure of strike tactics. Jim gets injured in the picketing, which is an initiation for him. He is full and happy for the first time, with an ecstasy something like a religious feeling, just like Root in " The Raid."

> " I used to be lonely, and I'm not any more. If I go out now it won't matter. The thing won't stop. I'm just a little part of it. It will grow and grow. This pain in the shoulder is kind of pleasant to me"[2]

Since he has been awakened to the great pleasure of altruism, Jim wants only to be used. Even his dead body is used by another leader, Mac, whose speech brings a convincing end to the novel: " He didn't want nothing for himself."[3]

The strike remains dubious. The novel also seems to be a battle-field for Steinbeck's doubts about the principle of union. The battle—the conflict between the objective group-man theory and the subjective pleasure of altruism—is revealed in the dialogue form of the novel, " permitting many varying opinions but keeping out any author's opinion."[4] What causes the disunion of the two subjects? The author sees a group of people too directly as one whole. The result is that the principle of union—the joy of association, or altruism, which should be in every one of them—disappears in that whole animal, and that of Jim Norlan looks isolated. Before fusing them into one view, the author needs to look again at the joints between the individual cells of that animal. In fact, his visual field is all at once reduced to the

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[1] Steinbeck, in Dubious Batlle, pp. 254-6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 343.
[4] Lisca, p. 117, quoting *The Journals of Andre Gide*, 27th Sept., 1940.

smallest unit of association—two men—in his next work.

Unlike as in *In Dubious Battle*, in *Of Mice and Men* the author restricts not only the scale of the group but also that of place and time elements. The immediate subject is a friendship between two migrant laborers, George and Lennie, yet the author makes use of their relationship to point up the loneliness pervading every typical migrant and the " needs of mankind for companionship."[1] "I hardly never seen two guys travel together," says one of the ranch hands.

> "You know how the hands are, they just come in and get their bunk and work a month, and they quit and go out alone. Never seem to give a damn about nobody."[2]

" That ain't no good," remarks George, " afte a long time they get mean. They get wantin' to fight all the time."[3] In fact, their hearts are aching with loneliness. " A guy needs somebody—to be near him," Crooks, a disabled black laborer whines to Lennie, a man with mental retardation " A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who the guy is, long's he's with you. I tell ya a guy gets too lonely an' he gets sick."[4] They are the loneliest men in the world, with no family, no home, no future, no friends who care for them. Among these lonely migrants, the joy of association is proclaimed triumphantly by George and Lennie:

> " But not us! An' why? Because . . . . because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why."[5]

However, their relationship also symbolizes that between leader and mass.[6] From the beginning, they walk in single file down the path; Lennie stays behind George, even in the open place.[7] George is small but quick, and he always has to tell Lennie, a loose giant, what to do. Above

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[1] Winifred L. Dusenbury, " Homelessness," *The Theme of Loneliness in American Drama*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1960, p. 48.

[2] John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1957, p. 39.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[6] Lisca, p. 139.

[7] Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*, p. 8.

all, George is one of the " feeders of hope "; he feeds Lennie with the " archtypal dream "[1] of all migrants, repeating like a ritual, " Someday—we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an' a cow and some pigs. . . "[2] The dream also provides Lennie with visions of a windmill, a smokehouse, alfalfa and rabbits, and so on. Crooks cynically tries to break down the dream:

> " I seen hundreds of men come by on the road an' on the ranches with their bindles on their back an' that same damn thing in their heads . . . every damn one of 'em 's got a little piece of land in his head. An' never a God damn one of 'em ever gets it. Just like heaven."[3]

Nevertheless, it allures George, Lennie, Candy (the old swamper) and even Crooks into banding together as a group, though for just a moment. After all, pity must be taken on George, who is aware of the falsity of the ideal and who has to kill Lennie in order to avoid the latter's lynching.

From this basic union, the author again raises his eyes to larger unions —first to that of a family, next to that of families, finally to that of all human beings into one great whole, in his next and greatest novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. All his earlier themes are fused into this one novel, as are all his earlier techniques, which shall be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

> But I like to think how nice it's gonna be, maybe, in California. Never cold. An' fruit ever'place, an' people just bein' in the nicest places, little white houses in among the orange trees. I wonder—that is, if we all get jobs an' all work—maybe we can get one of them little white houses.[4]

Led by a common dream, masses of refugees from dust, or tractors, flow onto Highway 66, which crosses the Mississippi, through Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, to California. After passing through the mountains, plateaus and deserts, suddenly the

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[1] Lisca, p. 138.
[2] Steineeck, *Of Mice and Men*, p. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[4] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, New York, The Modern Library, 1941, p. 124.

travellers look down into the rich valley of California, golden in the sun. Like the travellers in *The Pasture of Heaven*, they are ignorant of the reality of this heavenly beautiful valley below them. The one thing they are to do here is to scramble for work at the lowest wage. This causes a still more unprofitable situation for all the migrants. However, they suffer too much to think about anything else besides keeping their own families; " they jus ' hung down their heads an' won't even give a fella a howdy."[1]

Steinbeck develops the primary concept of the process of union by showing how those people develop wrath, how they come to think about other families, how their souls unite into one. The author suits his methods to this subject, adopting both of the former ways—reducing the visual field to a microcosm as in *Of Mice and Men*, and absorbing it into a macrocosm as in *In Dubious Battle*. While the author traces the history of one little personalized group, the Joads, every effort to make it impersonal is made by means of interchapters; the two currents approach each other and fuse into a single impression.

The Joads start their migratory life with a firm family union; as Ma says,

> "All we got is the family unbroke. Like a bunch a cows, when the lobos are ranging, stick all together. I ain't scared while we're all here, all that's alive, but I ain't gonna see us bust up."[2]

In spite of Ma's tenacious will to defend her family from breakup, members fall away one by one. However, the loss in the family is compensated for by uniting with a larger group—other families. For example, Grandpa dies in the tent of the Wilsons, another migrant family, whose car is repaired by the sons of the Joads in return; then the two families start westward again, now as a unit, realizing that " each'll help each, an' we'll all get to California."[3]

As they go on, they learn more. Near the end of the novel, they are

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 523.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 222.

again helped by other families at the birth of Rose of Sharon's child, which finally changes Ma's conception of the family.

> " Use' ta be the fambly was fust. It ain't so now. It's anybody. Worse off we get, the more we got to do."[1]

Though the Joads lose the baby in stillbirth, it is compensated for by removing the boundary of the family. In the last chapter, escaping from a flood to a barn, they meet a starving man and his little son. Ma sets the man's mind at ease about the boy, saying " he'll be awright."[2] The boy is now her child—everybody's child. To the same man, Rose of Sharon gives her milk; now the unknown man is " the collective substitute"[3] for her departed child. Thus, an isolated family grows into a part of a vast human family.[4]

Their experience is enlarged to the dimensions of " the migration's total picture"[5] in the interchapters.

> One man, one family driven from the land ; this rusty car creaking along the highway to the west. I lost my land, a single tractor took my land. I am alone and I am bewildered. And in the night one family camps in a ditch and another family pulls in and tents come out.[6]

Maybe two men tell their stories to each other. Here " I lost my land " is changed to " We lost our land." And because two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one,[7] they will fuse their two bitternesses in the same way as " the armies of bitterness will all be going"[8] someday.

> " Whyn't twenty of us take a piece of lan' ? We got guns. Take it an' say, ' Put us off if you can.' Whyn't we do that? "[9]

Thus, a wrath grows in all the hungry. However, besides this wrath,

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 606.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 617.

[3] Harry Slochower, " Towards a Communal Personality," *No Voice Is Wholly Lost*, New York, Creative Age Press, 1945, p. 302.

[4] Warren French, *John Steinbeck*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1961, p. 101.

[5] Lisca, p. 173.

[6] Steineeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 206.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

a still more important thing grows from the first " we "—love.

> " I have a little food " plus " I have none." If from this problem the sum is " We have a little food," the thing is on its way, the movement has direction. . . ."[1]

As it grows darker, more families gather, and when the sun gos down, perhaps twenty families are there:

> the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all. The loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the West was one dream.[2]

A sickness throws despair into the hearts of twenty families, while a birth fills twenty families with joy and even the poorest family searches for a present for the new baby.[3] Such altruism is the very beginning of the mevement from " I " to " we " because what cuts " I " off forever from " we " is the quality of owning.[4]

In such a group, leaders, laws, and codes emerge naturally. The families learn rights to be observed and rights to be destroyed. They also learn that the worst punishment is ostracism. They fix standards of social conduct and develop a kind of insurance for mutual help. They do so in every camp, every night, without any command. The form is so fixed that a family acting within the rules knows it is safe in the rules.[5] Steinbeck's interest in the unwritten laws comes out again in *Sea of Cortez* in connection with the group psyche-memory.

> Successful law is simply the publication of the practice of the majority of units of a society, and by it the inevitable variable units are either driven to conform or are eliminated. . . . The things of our mind have for us a greater toughness than external reality.[6]

Such coercive power, immanent in any kind of group, is what John Locke called ' the law of nature,' within the bounds of which men lived together in ' the state of nature.' For this ' state of nature,' for the spontaneous growth of union, the author has an affirmative feeling of trust

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 264.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 265–6.
[6] Steinbeck, *The Log fromt he Sea of Cortez*, p. 181.

such as he couldn't have for the organized method of *In Dubious Battle.*

This affirmative tone is encouraged by one more element, one which underlies Steinbeck's all works and which is finely fused into the principle of union in this novel; the faith in the life-force of people. Hooverviles (the camps of migrants) have been burned out by vigilantes many times, but they have soon been re-built, for " they jus' go hide down the willows an' then they come out an' build 'em another weed shack. Jus' like gophers."[1] The life-force of people is suggested in the similes comparing them to animals such as gophers, bugs, ants, and above all turtles, which keep their heads in the same direction and which persevere under any circumstances. The life-force of the animal world is admired most highly by the author in *Sea of Cortez:*

> It is noteworthy that the animals, rather than deserting such beaten shores for the safe cove and protected pools, simply increase their toughness and fight back at the sea with a kind of joyful survival.[2]

The life-force of people is emphasized by the framing of *The Grapes of Wrath*—a method similar to that of *The Pasture of Heaven.* Both the first and the last interchapters describe the threats of nature, drought and flood, yet the reactions of people are almost the same.

> The people came out of their houses and smelled the hot stinging air and covered their noses from it. . . . After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity and became hard and angry and resistant. Then women knew that they were safe and that there was no break. . . . Women and children knew deeply in themselves that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole.[3]

> And the men came out of the barns out of the sheds. They squatted on their hams and looked out over the flooded land. . . . And where a number of men gathered together, the fear went from their faces, and anger took its place. And the women sighed with relief, for they knew it was all right—the break had not come, and the break would never come as long as fear could turn to wrath.[4]

Through such reccurent motifs the author expresses the durability of

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 494.

[2] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 58.

[3] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, pp. 6–7.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 592.

their life-foce. This underlying faith is confirmed by the usual intervention of the biological world.

> Tiny points of grass came through the earth, and in a few days the hills were pale green with the beginning year.[1]

The faith is embodied in Ma Joad, whose intense will and courage survive every adversity.[2] That is, her will and courage are supported by her own instinct of union—she changes from " I " to " we " in the biological sense as well as in the sociological sense. Ma tries to tell her instinctive view to the daughter who is going to have a baby.

> " They's a time of change, an' when that comes, dyin' is a piece of all dyin', and bearin' is a piece of all bearin', and a bearin' an' dyin' is two pieces of the same thing. An' then things ain't lonely any more. An' then a hurt don't hurt so bad, 'cause it ain't a lonely hurt no more."[3]

Compare that view with the words of Joseph Wayne in *To a God Unknown:*

> " Everything seems to work with a reccurring rhythm except life. There is only one birth and only one death. Nothing is like that."[4]

It seems so because men live in jerks, Ma thinks. To women, life seems all one flow going right on. ' We ain't gonna die out. People is goin ' on."[5] Ma's life-force surely arises from her faith in the collective soul of the whole race for survival; as she herself says, " Everything we do—seems to me is aimed right at goin' on".[6]

The wrath, the love, and the faith in the life-force are all gathered into one idea by Casy, the preacher; his idea of " one big soul ever' body ' s a part of " is nothing but Steinbeck's own peculiar view of the principle of union as it finally crystallized. It is an idea free of sociological bounds and of biological bounds, an idea which expands to the imaginative dimension. Casy gets this idea through identifying

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] F. W. Watt, *Steinbeck*, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1962, p. 72.

[3] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 286.

[4] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, p. 134.

[5] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 577.

[6] *Ibid.*

himself with nature, just as Joseph Wayne did in *To a God Unknown.*

> " I went into the wilderness like Him [Jesus]. . . . There was the hills, an' there was me, an' we wasn't separate no more. We was one thing. An' that one thing was holy."[1]

Holiness in the unity of man and nature leads Casy's contemplation further, to the relation of man and man. " Mankin' was holy when it was one thing," he believes. Therefore casy's wrath is directed against what bursts the holiness—" the quality of owning " which prevents the " I " from uniting with the " we." His ideal is the time " when they're all workin ' together, not one fella for another fella, but one fella kind of harnessed to the whole shebang."[2]

The idea of holiness of one thing is repeated in *Sea of Cortez* in the form of a notion that ultimately everything is comprehended in a single organism.

> The disappearance of plankton, although the components are microscopic, would probably in a short time eliminate every living thing in the sea and change the whole of man's life. . . . For these little animals, in their incalculable numbers, are probably the base food supply of the world.[3]

If one considers that each species is at once the point and the base of a pyramid, the boundaries between species naturally grow misty.

> One merges into another, groups melt into ecological groups until the time when what we know as life meets and enters what we think of as non-life; barnacle and rock, rock and earth, earth and tree, tree and rain and air. And the units nestle into the whole and are inseparable from it. . . . And it is a strange thing that most of the feeling we call religious, most of the mystical outcrying which is one of the most prized and used and desired reactions of our species, is really the understanding and the attempt to say that man is related to the whole thing, related inextricably to all reality, known and unknowable.[4]

Steinbeck regards Jesus Christ as one of those who " discovered and reaffirmed with astonishment the knowledge that all things are one thing and that one thing is all things," bound together by the elastic string of

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 216.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 216–7.

time.[1] It is this knowledge that makes Jim Casy entertain not hatred but love for even his present enemies who raid him. Thus, what he says before he dies amounts to the same thing as the words of Christ: " You fellas don' know what you're doin"[2]

This idea is voiced by Casy,[3] but acted out by Tom Joad. Tom, coming out from prison, is alone at the beginnning of the novel; soon he joins his family. Then he becomes aware of thousands of similar families; he learns from Casy the ideal that " all work together for our own thing."[4] Finally, he leaves his own family in order to unite with the human family as a whole. Melting in to the darknss of night, he never appears again in the novel. This doesn't matter, however, because he melts into one big soul, so he is all around in th dark.

> " I'll be everywhere—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. . . ."[5]

The wrath against the social injustice of the thirties is " the driving emotion"[6] which lends this work its power. The love for the life-force of people is the constant emotion which lends this work beauty. These sociological ethics and biological ethics are woven into the " one big soul " idea. Thus, Steinbeck's preoccupation with the group, which began with the negtive description of mob-psychology, after a decade reached a definite affirmation of the creativeness of its " spiritual Whole."[7] It is often said that fiction deals with individuals, however intimately related. Moreover as to Steinbeck's preference for group novels, some say that he yielded his poetry to politics, which tended in the thirties

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 527.

[3] Slochower, p. 302.

[4] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 571.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 572.

[6] W. M. Frohock, " John Steinbeck: The Utility of Wrath," *The Novel of Violence in America*, London, Arthur Barker Ltsd., 1959, p. 140.

[7] Woodburn O. Ross, " John Steinbeck: Earth and Stars," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 176.

to sumberge the individual whithin in the group.[1] Yet what produced his poetry—the powerful rhythm of movement of the group, or the fascinating cry of the joy of association, as these things are found in *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*—is his hearty reconciliation with the group.

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In the thirties, many a writer was, at any rate, forced to face the group, not the individual. Even Hemingway attempted to describe masses of people in *To Have and Have Not*. In this work, for instance, he managed to have the protagonist recognize, abruptly and vaguely, the necessity for association: " One man alone ain't got."[2] Compare this with the conviciton with which Tom quoted from the Bible, " Two are better than one. . . "[3] Or, Compare the symbolical framings of the two "collective novels,"[4] *U.S.A.* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Dos Passos begins his novel with a lone vagrant hitchhiking away from home, and he ends it with him again alone and beckoning for a ride. Steinbeck begins his with Tom alone, hitchhiking home, and he ends it with his leaving to associate with the larger whole.[5] Dos Passos's emphasis on the individual above the group is persistant, while Steinbeck is " consonant "[6] with the group. The economic status of the people in *The Grapes of Wrath* is infinitely below that of the people of Dos Passos,[7] yet the work is filled with hope and reliance on the people. This is partly due to Steinbeck's own faith in the life-force of the people, yet it may also be attributed to the fact that he has not suffered the worst effect of collectivity—the war, which might have deprived those senior

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[1] R. W. B. Lewis, " John Steinbeck: The Fitful Daemon," *The Young Rebel in American Literature*, ed. Carl Bode, London, Heinemann, 1959, p. 139.

[2] Ernest Hemingway, *To Have and Have Not*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1961, p. 178.

[3] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, pp. 570–1.

[4] Hoffman, p. 138.

[5] Cf. Lisca, p. 176, and Slochower, p. 302.

[6] Claude-Edmunde Magny, " Steinbeck, of the Limits of the Impersonal Novel," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 718.

[7] Slochower, p. 304.

writers of their essential reliance on human nature. Therefore, apart from the merits of his Group novels, it will be interesting to see how his view was affected by war when he knew it. This change will be traced in the naxt chapter.

## Chapter II After the Thirties

### (i)

The United States entered the war in 1941. Steinbeck stayed abroad for several months in 1943 as a foreign correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune.[1] His first communique begins with another description of group-man in the form of troops.

> The men wear their helmets, which make them all alike, make them look like long rows of mushrooms. . . . They have no identity, no personality. The men are units in an army. The numbers chalked on their helmets are almost like the license numbers on robots.[2]

Unlike the groups described so far, however, the group-men here seem to send forth no spontaneous energy. As is indicated by the word, *robots*, Steinbeck indicates from the very beginning that men in war are not men, but automata, and repeatedly [redacted] accentuates the impression of mechanized group-men.

> They are simply units which take up six feet by three feet by two feet, horizontal or vertical. So much space must be alloted for the physical unit. They are engines which must be given fuel to keep them from stopping. The products of their combustion must be taken care of and eliminated.[3]

For operating these units, modern war needs many complex plans, just as if it were an automobile assembly line. " If one bolt in the whole machine is out of place or not available, the line must stop and wait for it"; improvisation is not very possible in either case.[4] In *Sea of Cortez*, this " present tendency toward collectivism " is apprehended as " a mutation of our species."

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[1] Lisca, p. 185.

[2] John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War*, New York, Bantam Books, 1960, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

> It is a rule in paleontology that ornamentation and complication precede extinction. And our mutation, of which the assembly line, the collective farm, the mechanized army, and the mass production of food are evidences or even symptoms, might well correspond to the thickening armor of the great reptiles—a tendency that can end only in extinction.[1]

It is plain that Steinbeck loves only what he considers " natural " and distrusts all of the complexities and artificialities of modern life.[2] So is it with group-men; though he seems not to be aware of it, the differences in tone between *In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath* might be partly attributable to the differnce in kinds of union, organized and natural. In fact, the contrast between the two kinds of union is the very subject of *The Moon Is Down*, his only war novel.

It is expressed through the different conceptions of the leadership of two groups, that of the totalitarian invaders and that of the invaded freemen. The invaders try to organize a puppet municipal government, using the leadership of Mayor Orden. Such a plan will never succeed in a free town, however, because the mayor is " an idea conceived by free men."[3] Rather, just as was first suggested in "The Leader of the People," leaders pop up among them like mushrooms whenever need be.[4] On the other hand, while herd men can move efficiently, " ten heads lopped off will destroy them."[5] The same conception is found in the essay annexed to *Sea of Cortez* in memory of the late Edward Ricketts, where Steinbeck criticizes the Sovit system.

> Twenty-five key men destroyed could make the Soviet Union stagger, but we could lose our congress, our president, and our general staff and nothing much would have happened. We would go right on. In fact we might be better for it.[6]

However, the men in different organisms—the present enemise of free men are also human beings who should fundamentally be pieces of " one

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 88.

[2] Ross, p. 169.

[3] John Steinbeck, " The Moon Is Down," *The Short Novels of John Steinbeck*, New York, The Viking Press, 1953, p. 269.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. xlvii.

big soul". The units of organism themselves are good people, even leading ones. However, if an officer could really feel the power in his dropped hand—that is, if he thought about what he is doing, he would not be able to perform his function. From *Sea of Cortez:*

> The whole structure of his world would be endangered if he permitted himself to think. The pieces must stick within their pattern or the whole thing collapses and the design is gone.[1]

Such a paradox is suffered by Colonel Lanser, the leader of the occupation troops. It is through this character that Steinbeck vividly expresses his view of war again in connection with mass psychology.

> " In marching, in mobs, in football games, and in war, outlines become vague; real things become unreal and a fog creeps over the mind, tension and excitement, weariness, movement—all merge in one great grey dream, so that when it is over, it is hard to remember how it was. . . . Then other people who were not there tell you what it was like and you say vaguely, ' yes, I guess that's how it was.' "[2]

So much for the war-novel. One more collective tendency that steinbeck apprehends—the mechanization of modern life—is a common theme in *Cannery Row*, in *The Wayward Bus* and in *The Pearl*. *Cannery Row* has much in common with *Tortilla Flat*. It is also a series of episodes about a group of vagabonds inhabiting a house which serves as " office and binder of their fellowhsip."[3] It is the same with the former in that the whole loose structure is tightened by the altruistic impulse of the group—to give a party for Doc, the center of love and respect of whle community. The simple way of lif of the group, or their joy of altruism, itself makes a criticism of complex modern life. The author pays his best tribute to the group of vagabonds.

> They are the virtues, the Graces, the Beauties of the hurried mangled craziness of Monterey and the cosmic Monterey where men in fear and hunger destroy their stomachs in the fight to secure certain food, where men hungering for love destroy everything lovable about them.[4]

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. 41.

[2] Steinbeck, *The Moon Is Down*, p. 223.

[3] Chafles Child Walcutt, " Later Trends in Form: Steineeck, Hemingway, Dos Passos," *American Literary Naturalism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1956, p. 265.

[4] John Steinbeck, *Cannery Row*, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1957, p. 110.

"The burried mangled craziness of. . . the *cosmic* Monterey" is sliced off into a microscopic section moved into a small vehicle, and then watched attentively by the scientist Steinbeck; that is what he has done in *The Wayward Bus*. He gathers a group of "type specimens"[1] of modern Americans in a small bus and observes how they interact with each other. The collective tendency of modern life is thus revealed —a business man who is "not one man but a unit in a corportion, a unit in a club, in a lodge, in a church, in a politial party,"[2] or a young boy and a girl whose ideals are standardized by mail-study advertisements and movie magazines. Such conformity had been fully satirized aquarter of a century before in Lewis's *Babbitt*, yet Steinbeck shows his uniqueness in dealing with the subject through the interaction within a casual group.

The last of the series of such critisicms is *The Pearl*. Unlike the peceding two works, the protagonist of this story is not a group but an individual, a pearl-fisher. However, we cannot fail to detect the author's interest in the group in the abundant descriptions of the reactions of the neighbors. In fact, through those reactions, the author reasons out how news travels through a town, a process which has been a constant wonder to him since *Tortilla Flat*.

> A town is a thing like a colonial animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns, so that there are no two towns alike. And a town has a whole emotion.[3]

Within its nervous system, if every single man differs from no one, that unit can remain unnoticed. However,

> let one man step out of the regular thought as the known and trusted pattern, and the nerves of the townspeople ring with nervousness and communication travels over nerve lines of the town. Then every unit communicates to the Whole.[4]

In another sense, the difficulty of an individual's stepping out of the

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[1] Antonis Seixas, "John Steinbeck and the Non-teleological Bus," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 278.

[2] John Steinbeck, *The Wayward Bus*, New York, Bantam Books, 1962, p. 26.

[3] John Steinbeck, *The Pearl*, New York, Bantam Books, 1962, p. 27.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

whole pattern is embodied in the experience of the protagonist, Kino, who has to return to his old life after a desparate struggle. His experience seems to verify a sermon of the Father.

> " Each man and woman is like a soldier sent by God to guard some part of the castle of the Universe . . . each one must remain faithful to his post and must not go running about, else the castle is in danger from the assaults of Hell."[1]

It might be said that in this sermon elements of both " the one big soul " idea and that of totalitarian mechanism are immanent. Steinbeck naturally still showed his constant preoccupation with the group after the war experience. However he began to show a defensive attitude toward the mechanism into which his own view of the principle of union topped by " the one big soul " idea might fall.

(ii)

Steinbeck's concern about such a danger seems to have been intensified during the post-war decade, when the collective tendency was conspicuous in politics both inside and outside the United States. The oppressive passion of anti-communism before, as well as during, the election campaign of 1952 was stirred up by Joseph McCarthy in the name of patriotism,[2] but it was nothing but a collectivism in the United States. The author made a trip to Russia in 1947 to see the same tendency. He learned that " nothing in the Soviet Union goes on outside the vision of. . . Stalin."[3] His statues and portraits are found everywhere, and under his watching eyes, the nonsense of censorship and an enormous bookkeeping system exist. What he felt in war-time seems to have been confirmed during this trip, for the same view, already stated in *Sea of Cortez*, is repeated over and over again after this trip, in the essay " *About Ed Ricketts* " (1951) or in the annexed introduction to *Once There was a War* (1958).

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.

[2] Cf. John Lukas, *A History of The Cold War*, New York, Doubleday & Co., 1961, pp. 100–107.

[3] John Steinbeck, *A Russian Journal*, New York, The Viking Press, 1948, p. 50.

> Over-integration in human groups might parallel the law in paleontology that over-armor or over-ornamentation are symptoms of decay and disapearance.[1]

A too greatly integrated system or society is in danger of destrucion since the removal of one unit may cripple the whole.[2]

However, Steinbeck advances his view further this time. He knows that such a system must destroy or remove all opposition as a danger, like sand in the bearings of a mechanical system, in order to preserve itself in safety. "But opposition is creative and restriction is non-creative," he asserts. Therefore, Steinbeck concludes that the process of integratin is to destroy all the tendencies toward improvisation, the habit of creation.[3] It is notable that he finds this creative power in the individual only.

> There is no creative unit in the human save the individual working alone. In pure creativeness, in art, in music, in mathematics, there are no true collaborations. The creative principle is a lonely and an individual matter. Groups can correlate, investigate, and build, but we could not think of any group that has ever created or invented anything. Indeed, the first impulse of the group seems to be to destroy the creation and the creator.[4]

The accusation here is directed against "the designed group"[5]; nevertheless the individual is here no doubt unmistakably emphasized above the group by Steinbeck for the first time. Moreover, this is not the only statemtnt of this new direction. Almost the same words are found in *East of Eden*, which he began to write in 1947 and finished in 1952.[6] The statement is begun with a comment on the contemporary collective tendency.

> It is true that two men can lift a bigger stone than one man. A group can build automobiles quicker and better than one man, and bread from a huge factory is cheaper and more uniform.

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, p. xlvi.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. xlvii.
[3] Ibid.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. xlvi.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Lisca, p. 263.

but there is
This itself is good; a danger that the mass method will get into our thinking, economics, and even religion; as Steinbeck says, "some nations have substituted the idea collective for the idea God." He continues this new statement in almost the same words as have been quoted above. Finally he comes to the following conclusion:

> And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected. And this I must fight against: any idea, religion, or government which limits or destroys the individual. . . . I will fight against it to preserve the one thing that separates us from uncreative beasts. If the glory can be killed, we are lost.[1]

This declaration contains nothing novel in itself. Yet, in the case of Steinbeck, it sounds like a conversion from his peculiar view of the principle of union a decade before—" his little piece of soul wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole. . . ."[2] Properly speaking, he directed his eyes *again* to the negative phases of the group which, in the thirites, he left untouched after *Cup of Gold.* It is beyond doubt that the war and the subsequent situation of the world had a deep effect on his thinking. However, this new belief cannot be as convincing as the " one big soul " idea. It comes out in the novel abruptly, with no relation with its context except for the word " glory "—creativeness—which appears in the first sentence of the main plot, " the glory came to Adam Trask through Casy." The statemtne does not emerge inevitably out of the novel as did the " one big soul " idea. Therefore, what disturbs the fusion seems to be his preoccupation with the group and his belief in the essential unity of mankind, a belief which he still holds to in spite of that declaration.

*Burning Bright*, which comes immediately before *East of Eden*, also shows an idea similar to that of *The Grapes of Wrath.* It is a story of a sterile man who was anxious to keep up his own blood line, but who has learned that it is the race that must go on. His conversion succeeds the biological etics in the " one big soul " idea.

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[1] Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, pp. 131–2.

[2] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 570.

" Every man is father to all children and every child must have all men as father. This is not a little piece of private property, registered and fenced and separated. . . . This is the Child."[1]

The author's interest in the principle of union is constantly perceived, even in *East of Eden*. Here, he defines his intuition of two phases of human nature—the principle of self-preservation and the principle of union—through Cyrus Trask, who conveys his view of soldiers to his son Adam.

"A soldier gives up so much to get something back. From the day of a child's birth he is taught by every circumstance, by every law and rule and right, to protect his own life. He starts with that great instinct, and everything confirms it."[2]

That is the principle of self-preservation. When he becomes a soldier he must learn to violate all of this—" he must learn coldly to put himself in the way of losing his own life without going mad." If he can do that, howevere, he will have the greatest gift of all.

" You will know a holy joy, a companionship almost like that of a heavenly company of angels."[3]

That is the principle of union. Steinbeck cannot conceive any individuality apart from its social context; this definition is repeated in a little essay written in 1955.

I believe that man is a double thing—a group animal and at the same time an individual. And it occurs to me that he cannot successfully be the second until he has fulfilled the first.[4]

As though to reveal such an irrestible interest in the group, even after *East of Eden*, he returns to the portrayal of the community of Cannery Row.

To a casual observer Cannery Row might have seemed a series of self-contained and selfish units, each functioning alone with no reference to the others. . . . The fact is that each was bound by gossamer threads of steel to all the others. . . .[5]

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[1] John Steinbeck, *Burning Bright*, New York, Bantam Books, 1960, p. 30.

[2] Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, pp. 26–7.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Steinbeck's 1955 essay for " The Saturday Review " as quoted in Lisca, p. 129.

[5] Steinbeck, *Sweet Thursday*, p. 37.

In *Sweet Thursday*, there is one satirical remark on the emphasis on the group in the form of a rich man's complaint against the tax laws.

> " The only creative thing we have is the individual, but the law doesn't permit me to give money to an individual. I must give it to a group, an organization—and the only thing a group has ever created is bookkeeping. To participate in my gift the individual must become part of the group and thus lose his individuality and creativeness.[1]

It might be so with the designed group—but " a perfect example of the collective goodness and generosity of a community"[2] is sown by the spontaneous group of Cannery Row. As in *Tortilla Flat* and *Cannery Row*, people band together for the altruistic purpose of giving a nice microscope to Doc, the spiritual symbol of the community. Their altruism must be contrasted with the egotism wich joins one to another in some designed group. The fact that such a kind of grouping is often noticed in politics is suggested in *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*.

> " Every one of the representatives had the good of France at heart, but it was also true that the ultimate good of France rested on the primary of faction or even individual."[3]

Steinbeck's preoccupation with the group has been constant throughout a generation, though it has not been expressed in the works of the last decade as directly as in those of the thirties. Concerning the change in his view of the principle of union, it seems to be traceable in a certain kind of technical tendency of this period rather than in the incoherent remark of *East of Eden*. Now is the time to center on the technical phase of Steinbeck's works.

## Chapter III Form

The works of Steinbeck contain abundant raw descriptions of mass movements, or simple enumerations of groups, but such expressions cannot possibly satisfactorily present his obsessive subject. Many

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[1] Steinbeck, *Sweet Thursday*, p. 172.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[3] John Steinbeck, *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*, London, Heinemann, 1957, p. 124.

critics have been amazed at his " versatility in the use of medium"[1] or " variety of forms."[2] Can it not be considered as a manifestation of his groping toward the right artistic realization of that obsession—the group?

His conscious groping for form seems to have begun with *The Pasture of Heaven*, which has a different appearence from the preceding two novels, *Cup of Gold* and *To a God Unknown*, which were narrated straight forwardly. *The Pasture of Heaven* is the first of his community novels, made up of many episodes, a list which includes *Tortilla Flat*, *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. Concerning this new method, he clarified his intention beforehand.

> They [the episodes] are tied up together only by the common locality and by the contact with the M.—s. . . . I thought of combining them with that thirty thousand ms called Dissonant Symphony to make one volume. . . . I think the plan at least falls very definitely in the aspects of American Life category.[3]

The likeliest method of presenting a society may be to accumulate fragmental impressions of its multitudinous aspects. Dos Passos enlarged the same method grandly in *U.S.A.*, while Hemingway depended on it for dragging the elements of the thirties into some parts of *To Have and Have Not*. However, Steinbeck's work has the most in common with Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. In both works, the short stories are tied together by a common locality (the Pasture of Heaven, Winesburg), by common go-betweens (the Monroes, George Willard) and by a common theme (false ideals, " human isolation "[4]) to the extent that the commuity may well be called the protagonist. In contrast with the neat framing of *The Pasture of Heaven*, Steinbeck's way of writing the other three is just as he says in the preface to *Cannery Row*:

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[1] George Snell, " John Steinbeck: Realistic Whimsy," *The Shapes of American Fiction*: 1798–1947, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1947, p. 187.

[2] Edmund Wilson, " The Boys in the Back Door," *A Literary Chronicle*: 1920–1950, New York, A Doubleday Anchor Book, 1952, p. 230.

[3] Steinbeck's letter as quoted in Lisca, p. 57.

[4] Cf. Maxwell Geismar, " Sherwood Anderson," *The Last of the Provincials*, New York, Hill nd Wang, 1959, p. 235.

" to open the page and to let the stories crawl in by themselves."[1] Nevertheless, in spite of the structural looseness, unity is sustained by the underlying general idea, altruism—one which is common to all three works.

Steinbeck's writings are based on this tendency to see a community through its various aspects, that is, " to think his matrial in episodes."[2] Its merits are displayed, for example, in such journalistic writings as *A Russian Journal* and *Once There Was a War*, in which he gives the certain meaning of any impression at any moment. His episodic and journalistic manner is also fully exhibited in the interchapters of *The Grapes of Wrath*, which will be discussed in more detail later. The tendency seems to be related to his excellence in the short stories. It can be perceived even in the completeness of each scene, with its rise, climax, and conclusion, in *Of Mice and Men*. These scenes compose a form called the " play-novelette."

This form is partly produced by his preoccupation with the group —here, not the group as subject, but the groups of people who read his work. His intention is as follows:

> For whatever reasons . . . the recent tendency of writers has been to deal in those themes and those scenes which are best understood and appreciated by groups of people. Something can not be understood in solitude . . . the thing that is missing is the close, almost physical contact with other people. . . .[3]

He marks the effects of something understood by multitudes, and tries to write a novel which can be acted and so appeal to great numbers simultaneously. Some kinds of novels are not at all suitable for this form, of course, but *Of Mice and Men* is " a study of the dreams and pleasures of everyone in the world "[4] as the author himself says, and so this form is suitable. The form is used also in two later works, *The Moon Is Down* and *Burning Bright*. A drama has a strong formulation and points all in one direction towards the catastrophe, but if it becomes too

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[1] Steinbeck, *Cannery Row*, p. 102.

[2] Lisca, p. 73.

[3] Steinbeck's letter, as quoted in Lisca, p. 133.

[4] Ibid., p. 134.

inevitable, it will become a lifeless mechanism.[1] Another disadvantage is that a play, or a dramatic novel, is hampered in its power to express peripheral matters.[2] How does the first play-novelette of Steinbeck solve these problems? First, at one point the strong pattern of inevitability threatens for a moment; Candy and Crooks try to join George and Lennie, and by their co-operation, their dream is suddenly brought within the realm of reasonable possibility. Here, however, as Lisca says, the tension between "the protagonists' free will and the force of circumstance" gives life to the work.[3] Second, the restriction of vision is not at all felt as a disadvantage. As it is "a study of the dreams and pleasures of everyone in the world," it is easily understood by everyone without any particular explanation about the background of action, or the manner of life, and without any definition of place or the indication of the lapse of time.

In the two other play-novelettes, however, the author is apparently hampered by these restirictions. In *The Moon Is Down*, he is forced to depend on flat descriptions of such peripheral matters as the character's careers, the background of the action, and the lapse of time, because he can not express them sufficiently through the action and the dialogue. For example, he rhetorically summarizes a growth of anger in the invaded that he cannot make them act out, imitating somehow an interchapter of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

> The people of the conquered country settled in a slow, silent waiting revenge. . . . The cold hatred grew with the winter, the silent sullen hatred, the waiting hatred. . . . And hatred was deep in the eyes of the people, beneath the surface.
>
> Gradually a little fear began to grow in the conquerors. . . . Thus it came about that the conquerors grew afraid of the conquered.[4]

In *Burning Bright*, the lapse of time is expressed through dialogue which is far from being ordinary speech.

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[1] Cf. Edwin Muir, *The Stucture of the Novel*, translated into Japanese as *Shosetsu no Kozo* by Shoichi Saeki, Tokyo, Dabiddo Sha, 1962, p. 43.

[2] Cf. Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1954, p. 210.

[3] Lisca, p. 138.

[4] Steinbeck, The Moon Is Down, p. 240–1.

" I think of the summer ending now and the stubble on the ground and the hay brushing the ridge pole in the barn and windfall apples on the orchard earth. And you — a swelling below your breasts and my child kicking against the soft wall. . . .

" I know the passing year. The fall is chilling down and the hoar frost does crisp and yellow the strong grasses near the stream under the tattering cottonwoods. . . . And you—you walk heavily on your heels, your shoulders back to balance the growing weight of my child. . . .

" I know the white drifts curving down to the silver ice in the shallows above the pond. . . . And you, Mordeen, quiet and tired with waiting—you move silently, with eyes and ears and touch turned inward to hear and see and feel my child."[1]

Through these sketch-like scenic dialogues a year passes, and then suddenly the real action begins. " Turn on the light, Victor, and build up the fire. The cold is creedping in. The winter's really here. My year of bearing is nearly done."[2] This is intended by the author to be " a kind of universal language "[3] to lift the story " to the parable expression of the morality plays."[4] A similar attempt to indicate a universality of experience is made in the setting; he places one story in three locations—the Circus, the Farm, and the Sea.[5] However, according to Edwin Muir, universalizing a subject is, rather, accomplished through the restriction of either time or space.[6] In fact, there is more universality in one particular town of *The Moon Is Down*, or in one personalized family of *The Grapes of Wrath*. (Of course, such an effect of universality arises from other devices, too). The time and place are intended to remain undefined in *The Moon Is Down*; concerning this function,there is nothing to equal the interchapters of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Steinbeck's groping for form is almost parallel with his groping for a personal view of the principle of union which was traced in the preceding chapters. As all his intuitions bear fruit in *The Grapes of Wrath*, so all his tecnical experiments are compounded into this novel, especially in the interchapters—enumerative writing, journalistic writing, episodic

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[1] Steinbeck, *Burrning Bight*, pp. 89–90.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[3] John Steinbeck, " Critics, Critics, Burning Bright," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 43.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[6] Muir, p. 84.

structure, symblical references drawn from the biological world, imaginary dialogue, and so on. Some may see it " as formless as a novel could well be,"[1] but naturally neat composition cannot be expected of such an expansive story of groups of people. By annexing "another and yet another trait of life" as Tolstoy did in *War and Peace*,[2] Steinbeck makes a broad impression of sprawling group-men. Peter Lisca compares Steinbeck's position in handling the Great Depression to that of Tolstoy, who had to put interminable chapters of comment and explanation of the Napoleonic Wars into *War and Peace*.[3] According to Percy Lubbock, Tolstoy wrote such chatpers " in the manner of a controversial pamphlet, lest the argument of his drama should be missed."[4] In the case of Steinbeck, there is no fear of missing the subject; the interchapters are not used for controversy, but for universalizing the subject. Every experience of the Joads is duplicated in the interchapters, while every incident in the interchapters can be shifted into the Joad history if given the proper nouns. Indeed a proper noun is hardly necessary in this novel—the author calls the waitress of the hamburger stand along the highway 66 " Minnie or Susy or Mae " and the cook " Joe or Carl or Al."[5] The first and the last interchapters end similarly to make a " full-circle "[6]

> The people came out of their homes. . . .
> The men were silent and they did not move often. . . .
> The women studied the men's faces secretly. . . .
> The children stood near by. . . .
>
> The men came out of the barns. . . .
> The women stood silently and watched. . . .

The protagonists are the human beings referred to in generic terms and the Joads are absorbed in all the men, all the women, and all the children.

Concerning the merits of the interchapters, some regard them as

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[1] Snell, p. 194.
[2] Lubbock, p. 26.
[3] Lisca, p. 154.
[4] Lubbock, p. 35.
[5] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, p. 209.
[6] Lisca, p. 177.

rhetoric used to produce a feeling of crisis[1] or to impose " a false epic note upon what is basically a sound conception."[2] Such criticism may be caused mainly by the prose style—by its " Biblical resonances"[3] or its journalese like the " Newsreels " of *U. S. A.* However, it is not too much to say that the style arises naturally from Steinbeck's preoccupation with the group—with groups of people as readers—as in the case of the play-novelette form. Biblical words are most likely to direct the minds of people to universalize unconsciously what they read, because such words are probably printed in the minds of a great number of people as a kind of group-psyche-memory. The same is true for the tone of the " Newsreel," which has been called an " internal monologue of collective consciousness."[4]

Much the same thing can be said of the whole structure of *The Grapes of Wrath.* As has been mentioned before, Steinbeck's tendency is towards a short sketch or a short chapter; to such a writer, the frame of the road-novel will be the most attractive vehicle, because it inevitably gives a unity to a set of episodes.[5] Steinbeck constructs his novel on one of the best known road-novel patterns—the Exodus in the Bible. According to Peter Lisca, the novel's three sections (the drought, the journey, California) correspond to the oppression in Egypt, the exodus, and the sojourn in the land of Canaan.[6] It is probable that such a Biblical pattern influences the minds of readers toward universalizing the story. The same thing has been true from even his first work, whether or not he was conscious of it. *Cup of Gold* is said to be an adventure story patterned after the quest for the Holy Grail,[7] a legend old enough to be imprinted in the group psyche-memory.

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[1] Kenzaburo, Ohashi, *Kiki no Bungaku*, Tokyo, Nanundo, 1957, p. 127.

[2] Hoffman, p. 152.

[3] Lisca, p. 162

[4] Claude Edomnde Magny, *L'Age du roman americain*, translated into Japanese as *Shosetsu to Eiga* by Shinchiro Nakamura and Hidehiko Miwa, Tokyo, Kodansha, 1958, p. 115.

[5] Frohock, p. 130.

[6] Lisca, p. 169.

[7] Walcutt, p. 259.

These two stories from the Bible and the Arthurian legend have one thing in common; a quest for a false ideal. This common bond may amount to this, that the subject comes from one of the most universal, or archetypal, psychic patterns of mankind. The dream is the external motif in *Cup of Gold*, guides Joseph in *To a God Unknown* to Nuestra Senora, makes the framework of *The Pasture of Heaven*, drives a bunch of pioneers toward the West in "The Leader of the People," puts the fruit pickers in *In Dubious Battle* on strike, and has the simplest form of the American Dream (" security, independence, a piece of land ")[1] appears in *Of Mice and Men*. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the author repeats the subject in a traditional way which joins with his unique interchapters to give an impression of " an archetype of mass migration."[2]

A Biblical or legendary pattern is equivalent to a parable. Steinback has tended to write more and more parabolically since *The Grapes of Wrath*. The most conspicuous example of this tendency is *The Pearl*. His intention of writing a kind of folklore seems to have begun with *Tortilla Flat*, which he asserts grew out of his study of the Arthurian cycle.[3] Making a long jump back in time, he tried to write *The Pearl* as a folk tale.[4] For that purpose, simplification was intended because, as Steinbeck states in his preface to the story, there are only " black and white things and good and evil things and no in-between anywhere "[5] in any of the retold tales that are in people's minds. To emphasize this parabolical tone, except for Kino and his near relatives, all the characters are referred to by such common nouns as the Father, the Doctor, the pearl buyer, the neighbors, or the dark trackers. Moreover a kind of animal fables runs parallel with the main action of the plot. After the greedy doctor showed his craft,

> out in the estuary a tight woven school of small fishes glittered and broke water to escape a school of great fishes that drove in to eat them. And in the houses the

[1] Carpenter, p. 76.
[2] Lisca, p. 171.
[3] John Steinbeck, " My Short Novels," *Steinbeck and His Critics*, p. 39.
[4] Ibid., p. 40.
[5] Steinbeck, *The Pearl*, Preface.

people could hear the swish of the small ones and the bouncing splash of the great ones as the slaughter went on. . . .[1]

High in the stone mountains where Kino and his wife escaped, the little springs bubbled out into pools. Every living thing that loves water comes to these little pools so that,

the little pools were place of life because of the water, and places of killing because of water.[2]

One of the little pools is the very place where Kino killed three trackers and where his baby was killed.

This interspersion of the biological world is a favorite method of Steinbeck; it is found in *To a God Unknown*, in *The Grapes of Warth*, in some short stories in *The Long Valley*, in a part of *Of Mice and Men*, or in some interchapters of *Cannery Row*. This is what Wilson called " the tendency to present human life in animal terms."[3] This tendency is often regarded as one of the reasons for the simplicity of Steinbeck's people, who are " always on the verge of becoming human, but never do."[4] Such simplicity of characterization is, however, required in a collective novel to a certain extent If he produces those characters " who, when removed from the framework of the play, crumble under the weight of their own improbability,"[5] they are nevertheless real in relation to the rest of the fiction of which they are a part, This corrseponds with his view that "man's necessary individuality is meaningless aprat from its social context "[6]—" his little piece of a soul wasn't no good ' less it was with the rest."[7] His way of creating characters as a function on the whole has something in common with his biological view in *Sea of Cortez*.

When the school is studied as an animal rather than as a sum of unit fish, it will be found that certain units are assigned speial functions to perform; that weaker or

[1] Ibid., p. 42.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[3] Wilson, p. 230.

[4] Alfred Kazin, " The Revival of Naturalism," *On Native Ground*, New York, Reynal & Hitchcock, 1942, p. 394.

[5] Geismar, p. 257.

[6] Lisca, p. 129.

[7] Steinbeck, *The Gapes of Wrath*, p. 570.

slower units may even take their places as placating food for the predators for the sake of the security of the school as an animal.[1]

There is one character who embodies such a view of function both in the sense of biology and in the fictional context: Victor in *Bunring Bright*. Victor's death is justified for the sake of universal brotherhood. From the viewpoint of biological evolution, he is used as a function contributing to the " continuation of the species",[2] while from the viewpoint of the fictional context, the physical fatherhood of Victor has to be replaced by the spiritual fatherhood of Joe Soul.

To return to form, as has been mentioned before, the author intended to write *The Pearl* as a folktale, and *Buring Bright* as a kind of morality play. *The Wayward Bus* is also, according to the epigraph cited from *Everyman*, " a morall playe," and its form resembles *The Caterbury Tales* which is abundant in the elements of the morality play.[3] The similar tendency is perceived in his way of titling works. Aside from names of communities, most titles of his novels come from the Bible, the Arthurian legends, the Veda, the classical works of Milton, of Shakespeare, of Burns and of Blake. They do not necessarily rerpesent the meanings in the original contexts, and the practice is not peculiar to him. However, it is significant to compare steinbeck's method with those of Sinclair Lewis or John Dos Passos who, like Steinbeck, excel in presenting a society rather than an individual. For all his uniqueness in presenting a type, Lewis prefered to use proper nouns as his titles for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of the personal career of the protagonist.[4] On the other hand, Dos Passos openly indicates his intention of presenting a collective novel in his titles, *The 42 Parallel*, 1919, *The Big Money*. All fictional works are in some sense aimed at universality, yet it is still characteristic of Steinbeck to seek it through following traditional pattersn. Such a tendency, remarkable in the later works,

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[1] Steinbeck, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, pp. 240–1.

[2] French, p. 151.

[3] Walcutt, p. 266.

[4] Cf. Sinclair Lewis, *From Main Street to Stockholm*, ed. Harrison Smith, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1952, p. 147.

implies that he was still preoccupied with the group, though he did not deal with it as his subject as directly as before, for that tendency is an attempt to appeal to the group unconsciousness.

How far such patterns work on the minds of people is beyond conjecture for a reader in a different culture area. However, the tendency appears so plainly in *East of Eden* that no reader can ignore the original story. The subject is the human desire to be loved, which Steinbeck thinks forms the history of human kind in any age or culture or race.[1] Coming back again to the Bible, he applies the Cain-Abel story to a family chronicle of modern America. He considers that story the best known in the world—" it is everybody's story, the symbol story of the human soul."[2] It seems as if the pattern of the original story enslaved the author, for not only many corresponding events, but also direct discussions of the subject are put into the novel. He goes so far into the pattern as to identify all the Cain characters by names beginning with C (Cyrus, Charles, Cathy, Caleb) and the Abel characters by those with A (Alice, Adam, Aaron, Abra).[3] With a device of this kind, a novel is liable to be but an illustration of a theory, and the characters naturally remain representative of " C " characters or of " A " characters. Why should the author persist in that pattern so excessively? What does all this emphasis on the universal subject mean? Can it not be regarded as his attempt to unite his new concern for the individual with his instinctive interest in the group? That is, into a strong universal pattern which has been formed by a great number of people, he thrusts an individual whose will may give his own process to that pattern and who may shape his own fate. The excessive persistence in the archetypal pattern is for the effect of emphasizing an individual, Caleb Trask. Thus, through the whole structure, the author tries to prove " the creativeness of the individual mind," as he declared rather abruptly.

The tendency to archetypal pattern leaves its trace upon his latest

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[1] Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, p. 304.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

[3] Lisca, p. 269.

novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, too. The novel belongs with such works as *Cannery Row*, *The Wayward Bus* and *The Pearl* in its critisicm of modern life. Money is a necessity for survival in modern life, and naturally many temptations to obtain money present themselves to any good small citizen. The need and temptation slowly erode his integrity day by day. The author signals such danger latent in modern life through a typical American citizen, Ethan Allen Hawley. Ethan remembers that during the war, he was required to slaughter human beings and rewarded for it.

> " It's always some kind of time. So far I have avoided my own time. I was a goddam good soldiers, Potkin—clever and quick and merciless, an effective unit for war time. Maybe I could be an equally efficient unit in this time."[1]

Thus, his integrity begins to become corrupted. His corruption is presaged on Good Friday as though " a parody of Juda,"[2] and his intrigue of betrayal is reflected in the title of the novel, quoted from *Richard III*. However, more noteworthy is the fact that the author uses the first-person narrator for the first time (except for the omniscient " I " in *East of Eden*, who has no relation with the subject.) When the commonest, typical citizen narrates in the first person, this " I " comes close to almost every " I " of the groups of readers. The author may thus intend to appeal, not to the collective sentiment such as group psyche-memory, but to the separate fear immanent in the individual mind. Or he may expect the first-person narration to be effective in throwing the protagonist as an individual into relief against the group. Nevertheless, it is plain that Ethan's history suggests the strong infection of an individual by the whole. As in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the author expects that a larger conclusion concerning the whole will be drawn " with something like participation " from association with one personalized group or individual.[3] He therefore narrates some chapters in the third person—for instance, the two introductory chapters in

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[1] John Steinbeck, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, London, Heinemann, 1961, p. 138.
[2] Watt, p. 103.
[3] John Steinbeck, Preface to *The Fogotten Village*, as quoted in Lisca, p. 167.

Part 1, and those two in Part 2 which describe the world outsid Ethan's family. They give a perspective to Ethan's restricted vision and a detachment to his fantastic monologue. Through the combination of two kinds of narration, the author seems again to attempt to unite his interests in the individual and in the group.

## Conclusion

Having traced the course of Steinbeck's view of the principle of union, and the form in which he expresses it, I notice some strange parallelism between the two. Yet it may not be strange at all, considering, as Percy Lubbock says, that " the form of the book depends on it (the subject), and until it is known there is nothing to be said of the form."[1]

Steinbeck's preoccupation with the group told him that men are like one another; therefore, there is an essential sense of brotherhood, and the whole brotherhood will continue even if an individual member dies. Therefore his view of literature naturally comes to this:

> A great and lasting story is about everyone or it will not last. The strange and foreign is not interesting—only the deeply personal and familiar.[2]

Compare that with his view of biology, which he states in *Sea of Cortez:* " Our interest had been from the first in the common animals and their associations, and we had not looked for rarities."

> The rare animal may be of individual interest, but he is unlikely to be of much consequence in any ecological picture. The common, known, multitudinous animals . . . would by their removal affect the entire region in widening circles.[3]

Therefore, contrary to those who are concerned with what makes an event unique, Steinbeck is concerned with " what makes it typical of reccurrent patterns of human behavior."[4] Thus, he comes to apprehend the principle of union in the sense of time as well as, or rather

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[1] Lubbock, p. 42.

[2] Steinbeck, *East of Eden*, p. 270.

[3] Steinbekc, *The Log from the Ses of Cortez*, pp. 215–6.

[4] French, preface, p. iii.

than, in the sense of space. That seems to mark a turning point from sociology to literature, especially in his later works. He comes to rank among those writers who look back to history and myth for "the prototypes of human fate," regarding them as "the promises of continuity and reccurence."[1] With such foresight, however, these writers may well believe with Harry Slochower that:

> The archetypal forms remain the same, but the process, meaning and direction depend on the impact of the individual will and of the imagination on the force of circumstances. In short, man can define the process of his microcosmic history. To that extent he can mold his fate.[2]

In fact, Steinbeck wrote a story of man's free will in the archetypal pattern—*East of Eden*. This new conviction of the creativeness of the individual mind may enable him to find a new viewpoint toward the principle of union and a new form for its expression in the future.

## A Checklist of Steinbeck's Works

Note: The figures in the parentheses indicate the years of first publication.

*Cup of Gold* (1929)
*To a God Unknown* (1933)
*The Pastures of Heaven* (1932)
*Tortilla Flat* (1935)
*In Dubious Battle* (1936)
*Of Mice and Men* (1936)
*The Long Valley* (1938) (includes "The Harness," "The Vigilante," "The Raid," "The Leader of the People," etc.)
*The Red Pony* (1937, 1938)
*The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)
*Sea of Cortez* (1941)
*The Moon Is Down* (1942)
*Cannery Row* (1945)
*The Wayward Bus* (1947)
*The Pearl* (1947)
*A Russian Journal* (1948)
*Burning Bright* (1950)
*The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951)
*East of Eden* (1952)

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[1] Slochower, p. 367.
[1] *Ibid.*

*Sweet Thursday* (1954)
*The Short Reign of Pippin IV* (1957)
*Once There Was A War* (1958)
*The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961)
*Travels with Charley* (1962)

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*In Dubious Battle*, New York, The Modern Library, 1939.
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